

Executive Summary

Introduction

This Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the U.S. 67 Expressway between Jacksonville and Macomb, Illinois has been prepared to identify the potential environmental affects associated with the proposed action in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the 1978 Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, and the Federal Highway Administration and Illinois Department of Transportation guidelines.

Preceding the FEIS, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the U.S. 67 Expressway between Jacksonville and Macomb was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) on July 5, 2001, for distribution to state and federal review agencies and public availability. The Draft EIS discussed social/economic and environmental resource impacts for a range of alternative improvements. The IDOT held a public hearing on August 8 and 9, 2001. The alternatives under consideration included both the Build and No-Build Alternatives. The Build Alternatives are shown in Figure S-1 and are generally described along with the No-Build Alternative as follows:

- Alternative E generally follows existing U.S. 67 from the west bypass of Jacksonville to U.S. 136 just east of Macomb, with bypasses around Beardstown, Rushville, and Industry.**
- Alternative A would begin at the west bypass of Jacksonville and would follow existing U.S. 67 to just east of Arenzville-Concord Road, where it then extends north to the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe railroad tracks through Concord. It would then follow a northwestern path along the southwest side of Mud Creek, passing through the bluffs area and bypassing Arenzville on the west. The alignment would then continue north until it rejoined the railroad tracks, then in a north-northwesterly direction connecting with the Beardstown Bypass. From the Beardstown Bypass it would generally follow existing U.S. 67 (with bypasses around Beardstown, Rushville, and Industry) to U.S. 136 just east of Macomb.**
- No-Build Alternative is defined as no new major construction. Improvements implemented under this alternative would be limited to short-term restoration activities (maintenance improvements) needed to ensure continued use of U.S. 67 between Jacksonville and Macomb. The design of the existing roadway, including location, geometric features, and current capacity limitations, would remain unchanged. Under this alternative, some minor improvements could be anticipated at high volume intersections. Generally, there would be no need for any additional right-of-way for the No-Build Alternative.**

On January 23, 2002, the IDOT leadership identified Alternative E as the preferred course of action, following consideration of engineering studies, environmental documents, and public input.

Information About This Final EIS

This Final EIS includes information presented in the Draft EIS. It also responds to comments on the Draft EIS, summarizes input received as a result of the public hearing and availability of the Draft EIS for review, and identifies the IDOT's and FHWA's recommended alternative and the basis for its selection.

All new language, including minor corrections in grammar, syntax, etc., that has been inserted into this Final EIS has been highlighted in bold lettering. In addition, new sections that have been added into the Final EIS have been highlighted entirely in bold.

Location

The proposed U.S. 67 improvement extends about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from the Jacksonville West Bypass north to U.S. 136 near Macomb (Figure 1-1). The project study area involves four counties; including, Morgan, Cass, Schuyler, and McDonough, and encompasses a number of communities. There are five principal communities in the study area with a combined population greater than 50,000: Jacksonville, Beardstown, Rushville, Macomb, and Meredosia. Smaller communities in the study area include Concord, Bethel, Arenzville, Chapin, Littleton, and Industry.

Proposed Action

The proposed action will provide a modern high-type highway between Jacksonville and Macomb, Illinois. The proposed highway facility will provide improved transportation continuity, enhanced economic stability and development, upgraded rural access, and improved travel efficiency. The proposed action is one of a series of proposed actions connecting western Illinois and the communities of Jacksonville, Macomb, and Quincy to each other and to the interstate system in the Rock Island/Quad Cities area, the interstate system in the St. Louis area, and to major cities in central Illinois.

Recommended Alternative

On January 23, 2002, the IDOT leadership announced the selection of Alternative E as the preferred alignment for improvement of the U.S. 67 Expressway. The selection of Alternative E was made after the public hearings, which were attended by more than 300 people. The IDOT received more than 900 written comments from citizens, businesses and local governments during the Draft EIS comment period.

A comparison of the features and impacts of Corridors A and E are discussed below:

- **Right-of-way** – Alternative E would utilize more existing right-of-way; the new right-of-way required for Alternative E would be 40 hectares (100 acres) (5%) less than for Alternative A.

- **Agricultural Impact** – Alternative E would require taking 61 hectares (150 fewer acres) of agricultural land, but would affect 16 more farms than Alternative A. Farm severances would be 92% greater (23 more farms) with Alternative A.
- **Displacements** – Residential and farmstead displacements would be approximately twice as many with Alternative E than with Alternative A. There would also be a larger number of other structures (sheds, barns, etc.) displaced by Alternative E.
- **Environmental Impacts** – Alternative A would affect more wetlands, natural areas, and threatened and endangered species than Alternative E. The differences, however, are relatively small.
- **Length** – Construction of Alternative A would reduce the trip length between Jacksonville and Beardstown by 7.2 kilometers (4.5 miles).
- **Cost** – The total cost of Alternative A would be approximately \$40 million (7%) less than for Alternative E.

Agency and public comments during the study process and project public hearings were fully considered in the selection of the preferred alternative. Among the respondents were eight regulatory agencies, including:

- U.S. Department of Interior, Office of the Secretary
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- IDOT Division of Aeronautics
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- Illinois Department of Agriculture
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Of those, two agencies (USEPA and IDNR) indicated a preference for selection of one alternative over the other. Both of these agencies favored Alternative E.

Throughout the study process, regular opportunities were provided for project area residents and local government officials to learn about and provide input to the U.S. 67 Expressway Design Study. Two sets of public information meetings were held, including one in Rushville and one in Beardstown. Small group meetings were also held with residents and officials of local communities, the Triopia School Board, *Friends of 67*, and area drainage commissioners.

Six newsletters were produced and distributed throughout the study area. Newsletter Number 5, which was sent out just before the Public Hearings, was sent to more than 1,500 names on the mailing list. Return-mail comment forms were included in each newsletter and were available at public meetings. More than 900 written comments have been received and considered throughout the course of the study.

Public Hearings were held in Rushville and Beardstown on August 8 and 9, 2001, respectively. Approximately 300 persons attended the two hearings combined. There were 83 written comments received during the course of, and following, the hearings. Also, seven oral statements were made to the court reporters at the hearings.

Morgan and Cass counties, and the cities of Jacksonville, South Jacksonville, Beardstown, and Rushville have all passed resolutions supporting the selection of Alternative E. In addition, the Jacksonville Regional Economic Development Corporation Board and the Brown County Development Board have both gone on record favoring Alternative E. The Western Prairie Audubon Society submitted a petition favoring Alternative E, stating that Alternative A would impact many threatened and endangered species. Finally, a petition, signed by 102 landowners and concerned citizens, was filed, supporting selection of Alternative A.

The comments provided by the public, local agencies, and communities, along with other engineering environmental studies led to the selection of Alternative E with the addition of several alignment modifications at Chapin, Beardstown, and Industry (see Section 3 for details). The primary factors that led to the selection of Alternative E included:

- Less new land would be required since Alternative E uses more of the existing right-of-way. Alternative E uses 40 hectares (100 fewer acres) than Alternative A.
- Fewer hectares (40, or 150 acres) of agricultural land would be taken by Alternative E.
- Fewer environmental impacts to wetlands, natural areas, and threatened and endangered species in Alternative E.
- Alternative E was a clear favorite among local communities and key resource agencies as well as being favored by the general public.

Environmental Impacts

The primary environmental impacts associated with Alternative A and E are summarized in Table S-1. The table provides a comparison among the primary impact categories. These and other natural resource and social/economic impacts are discussed in detail in Section 4 – *Environmental Consequences*.

TABLE S-1
Comparison of Alternative Alignments

Impacts	Jacksonville to Macomb		Jacksonville to Beardstown	
	Alternative A	Alternative E	Alternative A	Alternative E
Length - kilometers (miles)	91.9 (57.1)	99.1 (61.6)	35.7 (22.2)	43.1 (26.8)
Total Right-of-Way Required - hectares (acres)	987 (2,440)	1068 (2,640)	319 (790)	401 (990)
Amount of Existing Right-of-Way Used - hectares (acres)	165 (410)	287 (710)	4 (10)	125 (310)
Amount of New Right-of-Way Required - hectares (acres)	821 (2,030)	781 (1,930)	315 (780)	275 (680)
Total Right-of-Way that is Agricultural Land - hectares (acres)	756 (1,870)	696 (1,720)	299 (740)	238 (590)
Total Affected Farms	153	169	43	59
Severed Farms	48	25	27	4
Displacements				
Residential/Farmsteads	19	40	6	27
Other Structures (sheds, barns, etc.)	54	83	22	51
Commercial	1	1	0	0
Public (Governmental) Facilities	1	1	0	0
Area of Wetlands Impacted - hectares (acres)	16.3 (40)	13.0 (32)	3.5 (9)	0.3 (1.0)
Natural Areas Impacted	2	1	1	0
Threatened and Endangered Species	8	5	6	3
Cost (\$ million) including new Illinois River Bridge	\$520	\$560	\$260	\$300

Time Frame for Proposed Action

Following the completion of the Final EIS and Record of Decision, the project's design engineering phase will begin on priority segments of the project. Completion of roadway design plans for the earliest segments are targeted for completion in Spring 2003. Real estate acquisitions of the earliest segments are planned for Summer 2003. Construction of the earliest segments will be planned for Fall 2003.

Other Activities Required

Regulatory permits required for Alternative E would include the following:

- **Section 404 of the CWA from the USACOE**
- **Section 401 of the CWA Water Quality Certification from the IEPA**
- **Section 9 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 from the US Coast Guard**
- **River, Lakes, and Streams Act of 1911 from IDNR - Office of Water Resources**
- **Notification of Demolition and Renovation permit from IEPA**

- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) from the IEPA**
- **Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) approval under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, 1966**

Property acquisitions and relocations will be in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (as amended).